

# Pupil Handbook

2025/2026

**EMA**

**Education Maintenance Allowance**

# **EMA PUPIL HANDBOOK**

## **2025/2026**

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# EMA PUPIL HANDBOOK

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### INTRODUCTION

If you have been awarded an EMA please refer to this handbook. If you have any queries regarding the terms and conditions of your Education Maintenance Allowance you should be able to find answers here.

The handbook includes payment dates for the year and EMA procedures, including what to do if you are absent from school. Please follow instructions as required. If you need any further information please don't hesitate to contact the EMA Team.

Address :     EMA Team  
                  [ema@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:ema@dundeecity.gov.uk)

Dundee City Council  
Customer Services & IT  
Dundee House  
50 North Lindsay Street  
DUNDEE  
DD1 3YJ

Telephone    01382 433749

Further information can also be obtained from the EMA page of the Dundee City Council website: [www.dundeecity.gov.uk/education/ema](http://www.dundeecity.gov.uk/education/ema)

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## **1. Type of Award**

There are two types of Education Maintenance Allowance awards:

### **1.1 EMA 1 – August Award**

This applies to pupils who are 16 years of age on or before 30th September 2025. This EMA award is payable from August 2025 if your application form is received by 30th September 2025. Any application forms received after 30th September 2025 will be only be paid from the date your application is received. Applications will not be accepted after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. Also, no payment can be made until your Learning Agreement is returned to the EMA Team. This must be fully completed and signed by yourself, your parent(s)/guardian(s) and school. (See 2.0 of this booklet).

### **1.2 EMA 2 – January Award**

This applies to pupils whose 16th birthday is between 1st October 2025 and 28th February 2026. This award is payable from January 2026. If your application form is received by 28th February 2026 payment will be made from the start of the spring term. Any application forms received after 28th February 2026 will be paid from the date your application is received. Also, no payment can be made until your Learning Agreement returned to the EMA Team. This must be fully completed and signed by yourself, your parent(s)/guardian(s) and school. (See 2.0 of this booklet).

**Applications will not be accepted after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

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### 2. Learning Agreement

A Learning Agreement is a contract between you and your school. It must detail the subjects you intend to study and the level to which you will work. The conditions also cover your school's aims and standards of conduct - uniform policy for example, and the need to meet all elements of your study programme – such as submitting homework on time.

If you fail to meet any of the conditions of your Learning Agreement, your EMA payment may be withheld.

The Learning Agreement should be discussed, completed and signed by you, your school and your parent(s)/carer(s). This should be done as soon as possible after receipt. You cannot receive payment until The EMA Team has received a copy of your completed Learning Agreement from your school. Your Learning Agreement must be **returned within one month** from the date your EMA Award has been made.

The Learning Agreement is a “living” document and should be referred to throughout the academic year.

**Please remember that you will need to complete a new application form and Learning Agreement for each academic year.**

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### 3. Absence

EMA is paid for 100% attendance in every timetabled class and payment can be withheld for any unauthorised absence during that week. In general, if you are absent from school, your EMA may be withheld. Guidelines for sickness absence follow:

#### 3.1 Responsibility

**YOU** are responsible for:-

Reporting your sickness to your school

- Obtaining, completing and returning to school any documentation required to support sickness absences, appointments or training days. These can be scanned and emailed to [ema@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:ema@dundeecity.gov.uk). The original documentation should, in the first instance, be handed to your school.

**Your school** is responsible for:-

- The recording of daily attendance patterns for pupils
- Retaining pupil attendance and absence data records
- Retaining other relevant documentation and information (e.g. letters, medical and self certification forms)

#### 3.2 Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

EMA absence procedures are in addition to normal absence guidelines at school. A telephone call or letter from your parent/carer is not enough to authorise EMA payment. If you miss school due to illness you should follow the following procedures:-

**On your first day of sickness absence** – you must contact the school office as soon as possible and advise the reasons for and estimated length of absence. The first school day of sickness is regarded as the first day of sickness absence.

**If sickness absence continues for five school days or more** – by no later than the sixth school day, you must request a medical certificate or letter from your doctor and send this to the school office. You must submit further medical certificates to cover any continued absence. The medical certificate may have to be provided at your own expense. If you have an ongoing medical condition which may affect attendance, please contact your school for further information.

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### 3.3 Medical Certificates & Absences Due to Ill Health

You must provide evidence that you are or were unfit to attend school due to ill health. You are allowed a maximum of 5 days self certified absence in any one term. Self certificates are allowed only for genuine medical illness; your school is entitled to ask for further information should a pattern of absence appear. Once the 5 day threshold is reached, you will not be paid for any future medical absence in that EMA term. The only exception may be where the absence is covered by a medical certificate. (see 3.2 above)

### 3.4 Unexplained / Late Attendance

You will not be paid if you have any unexplained absences. You must discuss these with the school and get them updated before the payment can be reviewed.

Poor timekeeping can affect your EMA payments. If you are late any more than 2 times in any week your EMA payment will be withheld. Continual lateness may result in your EMA being suspended. Payments will resume when acceptable levels of timekeeping are met.

### 3.5 Study Leave

Study leave during the exam period is decided at school level and can vary from school to school. Official study leave will not affect EMA payments but you must ensure that you are not absent out with these dates – e.g. if study leave is confirmed as starting on a Wednesday and ending on a Thursday, you must have full attendance for the Monday, Tuesday preceding and the Friday following. Absence out with official study leave dates will result in non-payment for the relevant week. Should you not attend your exams during the period, payment will be withheld. Study Leave payments are automatically withheld if you DO NOT have 100% authorised attendance in 2 of the 3 weeks preceding study leave

### 3.6 S6 Pupils

S6 pupils are considered to have completed their course after the date of their last exam. S6 pupils have no timetabled classes after the end of official study leave and are therefore no longer eligible for weekly payments.

## 4. Changes in Circumstances

You must inform the EMA Team immediately in writing, preferably by email [ema@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:ema@dundeecity.gov.uk) if there is any change in your or your family's circumstances, for example:

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- You move house or change your email address
- You start to live with different parent(s)/carer(s)
- Your bank account details change
- If you leave school

If you move house or start to live with different parent(s)/carer(s), you must also inform your school.

### 5. DATA PROTECTION

For Data Protection reasons we may only be able to discuss certain matters with you and not your parent/carer. These include individual award amounts, confirmation of payment or reasons for withheld payment. This means that for most EMA enquiries it must be you and not your parent/carer who contacts your school or the EMA team.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a scheme funded by the Scottish Government and administered by Dundee City Council for schools in the Dundee City area. The Scottish Government and Dundee City Council are both data controllers in relation to your information.

The information you supply shall be used for the purpose of assessment, award, payment and where necessary, recovery of the EMA and we will provide information to the Scottish Government, all in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Government EMA (Scotland) Business Model.

We may check information provided by you, or information about you provided by a third party, with other information held by us. We may also get information about you from certain third parties, or give information to them, to check the accuracy of information, to prevent or detect crime, or to protect public funds in other ways, for research and statistical purposes, as permitted by law. These third parties include other government departments.

We will not disclose information about you to anyone outside Dundee City Council unless the law permits us to.

### 6. APPEALS

#### 6.1 Appeals – Applications

If you are refused EMA support, or feel the amount awarded is incorrect, you may appeal.

This must be submitted in writing, preferably by email or letter within 1 calendar month of us informing you of the outcome of your award.

This email / letter should be sent to the EMA Team - [ema@dundeecity.gov.uk](mailto:ema@dundeecity.gov.uk) or Customer Services & IT, Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee DD1 3YJ.

You must state the reason for the appeal and your letter/email must be accompanied by any relevant additional evidence or information. Such evidence may be clarification of household income, written



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confirmation from employers if available, or a benefits statement if not already provided.

All such evidence is considered confidential under the terms of the Data protection Act and treated accordingly.

The Appeal Process should take no longer than 1 month. Receipt of your appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You will be informed if your appeal has been successful or unsuccessful, either by email or in writing one month of receipt of the appeal. However, it is possible that some may raise issues of government policy which may require more time to resolve.

Where your appeal is successful you will receive a new Letter of Award and if applicable, an EMA Learning Agreement. Where a student is successful with an appeal, they will be eligible to backdated pay in accordance with the date their application was received and satisfactory attendance.

#### 6.2 Appeals – Withheld payment

Payments are generally withheld due to unauthorised attendance, lack of progress and/or conduct. If you have a question about a withheld weekly payment you must **contact your school in the first instance**.

#### 6.3 Appeals – General

Dundee City Council has an Appeals Register which details information surrounding appeals and the date of their resolution and also of their outcome.

This information will be made available to the Scottish Government EMA team on an annual basis to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of the programme.

### 7. Terms and Conditions

1. EMA will continue to be paid only if the pupil's attendance, conduct and progress are satisfactory. The EMA Team may suspend or terminate an EMA if the conditions of award are not complied with.
2. The pupil must notify their school in email/writing about any absence, where possible, in advance of absence.
3. The pupil must undertake a study programme of at least 21 hours duration each week.
4. The pupil must ensure that all requirements of their study programme are met.
5. The pupil must support the school's behaviour policy.

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6. EMA may be withdrawn should attendance in any class fall below the 100% minimum requirement.
7. The EMA Team must be informed immediately if, through any circumstances, it is impossible for the pupil to continue his/her attendance and studies. Premature withdrawal from school may necessitate a refund of any overpayment.
8. The EMA Team must be provided with information and any documents required to fully process an EMA Application.
9. The EMA Team must be informed of any change of income or other particulars (i.e. change of address, bank details ect), relative to the award.
10. If your School/Learning Centre are not satisfied with the attendance, conduct or progress, the EMA Team are entitled to seek re-payment of the whole or part of the allowance which may have already been paid.
11. Where any overpayment is made, whether as a result of suspension or termination EMA or otherwise, then responsibility for repayment shall be held by the pupil and their parent(s)/carer (s) on the basis of joint and several liability.

### 8. **PAYMENT - Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **When will EMA be paid?**

EMA is a weekly amount paid fortnightly in arrears, dependant on school or public holidays. See payment date sheet at:  
[www.dundee.gov.uk/education/ema](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/education/ema)

#### **How is EMA paid?**

EMA will be paid directly into your bank account. If you change your bank account details you must inform the EMA Team immediately. Please do this by email to [ema@dundee.gov.uk](mailto:ema@dundee.gov.uk)

#### **Will I be paid for School Holidays?**

No, you will be paid for 100% attendance at school, up to a maximum of 42 weeks (unless you are currently undertaking an Activity Agreement). A school week is deemed to be 3 days or more. If any school week is less than 3 days, no payment will be made, however In-Service days are not included in this calculation. If you are absent at any time during a school week, your payment may be withheld. Holidays and school weeks less than 3 days for which no payment is due are shown on the payment date sheet.

#### **Does my performance at school affect the EMA?**

Yes - payment can be withheld, without warning, based on the following:

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- If attendance falls below 100% in any one week - no payment will be made for that week unless all absence has been covered by a medical certificate, self certificate (within acceptable threshold - see section 3.3) or has been authorised by your school. Lateness can also affect payments.
- If you fail to meet the conditions of your Learning agreement (attainment and conduct)

### **What period does this application cover?**

An award will be for one school year only from August 2025 - July 2026. A new application and supporting documents must be submitted each year.